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A

# LETTER

To the REVEREND  
Mr. JOHN WESLEY:

In ANSWER to his

## SERMON,

ENTITULED,

### FREE - GRACE.

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By GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A. B.  
Late of Pembroke-College, Oxford.

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*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him  
to the Face, because he was to be blamed.*

GAL. ii. 11.

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## P R E F A C E.

I Am very well aware what different Effects the publishing this Letter against the dear Mr. Wesley's Sermon will produce. Many of my Friends, that are strenuous Advocates for universal Redemption, will immediately be offended. Many that are zealous on the other Side will be much rejoiced. They that are luke-warm on both Sides, and are carried away with carnal Reasoning, will wish this Matter had never been brought under Debate. The Reasons I have given at the Beginning of the Letter, I think sufficient to satisfy all of my Conduct herein. I desire therefore, that they who hold Election would not triumph, or make a Party on one Hand (for I detest any such Thing) and that they who are prejudiced against that Doctrine, be not too much concerned or offended on the other. Known unto God are all his Ways from the Beginning of the World. The great Day will discover why the Lord permits dear Mr. Wesley and me to be of a different Way of thinking. At present I shall make no Enquiry into that Matter beyond the Account which he has given of it himself in the following Letter, which I lately received from his own dear Hands.

London, August 9. 1740.

My dear Brother,

" I Thank you for yours, May the 24th. The Case is  
" quite plain. There are Bigots both for Predesti-  
" nation and against it. God is sending a Message to  
" those on either Side. But neither will receive it unless  
" from one who is of their own Opinion. Therefore, for

“ a Time you are suffered to be of one Opinion, and I of  
“ another. But when his Time is come, God will do  
“ what Man cannot, namely, make us both of one Mind.  
“ Then Persecution will flame out, and it will be seen  
“ whether we count our Lives dear unto ourselves, so that  
“ we may finish our Course with Joy.

I am, my dearest Brother,

ever yours, J. WESLEY.

Thus my honoured Friend. I heartily pray God to hasten  
the Time for his being clearly enlightened into all the Doc-  
trines of divine Revelation, that we may thus be closely  
united in Principle and Judgment, as well as Heart and  
Affection. And then if the Lord should call us to it, I  
care not if I go with him to Prison, or to Death. For  
like Paul and Silas, I hope we shall sing Praises to God,  
and count it our highest Honour to suffer for Christ's  
Sake, and lay down our Lives for the Brethren.

A L E T-

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## L E T T E R

From the REVEREND

Mr. GEORGE WHITFIELD,

To the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN WESLEY.

Bethesda in Georgia,  
December 24, 1740.

Reverend and very dear Brother,

**G**OD only knows what unspeakable Sorrow of Heart I have felt on your Account, since I left *England* last. Whether it be my Infirmity or not, I frankly confess, that *Jonah* could not go with more Reluctance against *Nineveh*, than I now take Pen in Hand to write against you. Was Nature to speak, I had rather die than do it; and yet if I am faithful to God, and to my own and other's Souls, I must not stand neuter any longer. I am very apprehensive that our common Adversaries will rejoice to see us differing among ourselves. But what can I say? The Children of God are in Danger of falling into Error.—Nay, Numbers have been misled, whom God has

has been pleas'd to work upon by my Ministry, and a greater Number are still calling aloud upon me also to shew my Opinion; I must then shew that I know no Man after the Flesh, and that I have no Respect to Persons any further than is consistent with my Duty to my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

This Letter, no doubt, will lose me many Friends. And for this Cause, perhaps God has laid this difficult Task upon me, even to see whether I am willing to forsake all for him, or not. From such Considerations as these, I think it my Duty to bear an humble Testimony, and earnestly plead for the Truths, which I am convinced, are clearly revealed in the Word of God. In the Defence whereof I must use great Plainness of Speech, and treat my dearest Friends upon Earth with the greatest Simplicity, Faithfulness and Freedom, leaving the Consequences of all to God.

For some time before, and especially since my last Departure from *England*, both in public and private, by preaching and printing, you have been propagating the Doctrine of *Universal Redemption*. And when I remember how *Paul* reproved *Peter* for his Dissimulation, I fear I have been sinfully silent too long. Oh then be not angry with me dear and honoured Sir, if now I deliver my Soul by telling you that I think in this you greatly err.

'Tis not my Design to enter into a long Debate on GOD'S DECREES. I refer you to Dr. *Edwards* his *Veritas Redux*, which, I think, is unanswerable, except in a *certain Point*, concerning a middle Sort between *Elect* and *Reprobate*, which he himself in Effect afterwards condemns.

I shall only make a few Remarks upon your Sermon, entitled *Free Grace*. And before I enter upon the Discourse itself, give me leave to take a little Notice of what, in your Preface, you term *an indispensable Obligation*, to make it public to all the World. I must own, that I always thought you were quite mistaken upon that Head. The Case (you know) stands thus; when

when you was at *Bristol*, I think you received a Letter from a private Hand, charging you with not preaching the Gospel, because you did not preach up Election. Upon this you drew a Lot. The Answer was *preach and print*. I have often questioned, as I do now, whether in so doing, you did not tempt the Lord. A due Exercise of religious Prudence, without a Lot, would have directed you in that Matter. Besides, I never heard that you enquired of God, whether or not Election was a Gospel doctrine. But I fear, taking it for granted, it was not, you only enquired whether you should be silent, or preach and print against it? However this be, the Lot came out *preach and print*; accordingly you *preached and printed* against Election. At my Desire, you suppressed the publishing the Sermon whilst I was in *England*; but soon sent it into the World after my Departure, Oh that you had kept it in! However, if that Sermon was printed in answer to a Lot, I am apt to think one Reason, why God should so suffer you to be deceived was, that hereby a special Obligation might be laid upon me faithfully to declare the Scripture Doctrine of Election, that thus the Lord might give me a fresh Opportunity of seeing what was in my Heart, and whether I would be true to his Cause or not; as you could not but grant, he did once before, by giving you such another Lot at *Deal*. The Morning I sailed from *Deal* for *Gibraltar*, you arrived from *Georgia*.—Instead of giving me an Opportunity to converse with you, tho' the Ship was not far off the Shore; you drew a Lot, and immediately set forwards to *London*. You left a Letter behind you, in which were Words to this Effect. “When I saw God, by the Wind which was carrying you out, brought me in, I asked Council of God. His Answer you have enclosed.” This was a Piece of Paper, in which was written these Words. “Let him return to *London*.”

When I received this, I was somewhat surprized.—Here was a good Man telling me he had cast a Lot, and

and that God would have me return to *London*. On the other Hand, I knew my Call was to *Georgia*, and that I had taken Leave of *London*, and could not justly go from the Soldiers who were committed to my Charge. I betook myself with a Friend to Prayer. That Passage on the first Book of *Kings* Chap. 13. where we are told, “That the Prophet was slain by “a Lyon, that was tempted to go back contrary to “God’s express Order, upon another Prophet’s telling “him God would have him do so.” This Passage, I say, was powerfully impressed upon my Soul: I wro’*e* you Word that I could not return to *London*. We sail’d immediately. Some Months after, I received a Letter from you at *Georgia*, wherein you wrote Words to this Effect. “Tho’ God never before gave me a “wrong Lot, yet, perhaps, he suffered me to have “such a Lot at that Time, to try what was in your “Heart.” I should never have publish’d this private Transaction to the World, did not the Glory of God call me to it.—It is plain you had a wrong Lot given you here, and justly, because you tempted God in drawing one. And thus I believe it is in the present Case. And if so, let not the Children of God, who are mine and your intimate Friends and Advocates for *Universal Redemption*, think that Doctrine true, because you preached it up in Compliance with a Lot given out from God.

This, I think, may serve, as an Answer to that Part of the Preface, to your printed Sermon, wherein you say “Nothing but the strongest Conviction, not only “that what is here advanced is the Truth as it is in Je-“sus, but also that I am *indispensably obliged* to declare “this Truth to all the World.” That you believe what you have wro’*e* to be Truth, and that you ho-  
nestly aim at God’s Glory in writing, I do not in the least doubt. But then, honoured Sir, I can’t but think you have been much mistaken in imagining that your tempting God by casting a Lot in the Manner you did, could lay you under an *indispensable Obliga-  
tion*

to any Action, much less to publish your Sermon against the Doctrine of Predestination to Life.

I must next observe, that as you have been unhappy in printing at all, upon such an *imaginary Warrant*, so you have been as unhappy in the Choice of your Text, Honoured Sir, how could it enter into your Heart, to chuse a Text to disprove the Doctrine of *Election*, out of the 8th of the *Romans*, where this Doctrine is so plainly asserted, that once talking with a Quaker upon this Subject, he had no other way of evading the Force of the Apostle's Assertion, than by saying "I believe *Paul* was in the wrong." And another Friend lately, who was once highly prejudiced against *Election*, ingenuously confessed that he used to think St. *Paul* himself was mistaken, or that he was not truly translated.

Indeed, Honoured Sir, it is plain, beyond all Contradiction, that St. *Paul*, thro' the whole eighth of the *Romans*, is speaking of the Privileges of those only who are really in Christ. And let any unprejudiced Person read what goes before and what follows your Text, and he must confess the Word *all* only signifies those that are in Christ, and the latter Part of the Text plainly proves, what, I find, dear Mr. *Wesley* will, by no means grant, I mean the final Perseverance of the Children of God. "He that spared not " his own Son, but freely gave him for us all, *i. e.* all " Saints, how shall he not with him also freely give us " all Things." *Grace*, in particular, to enable us to persevere, and every Thing else necessary to carry us Home to our Father's heavenly Kingdom.

Had any one a mind to prove the Doctrine of *Election*, as well as of *final Perseverance*, he could hardly wish for a Text more fit for his Purpose, than that which you have chosen to *disprove* it. One that does not know you, would suspect you yourself was sensible of this. For after the first Paragraph, I scarce know whether you have mentioned it so much as once, thro' your whole Sermon.

But your Discourse, in my Opinion, is as little to the Purpose as your Text, and instead of warping, does but more and more confirm me in the Belief of the Doctrine of God's eternal Election.

I shall not mention how illogically you have proceeded.—Had you wrote clearly, you should first, Honour'd Sir, have proved your Proposition, “ That “ God's Grace is free to all,” and then by way of Inference exclaimed against what you call the *horrible Decree*. But you knew People (because *Arminianism*, of late, has so much abounded amongst us) were generally prejudiced against the Doctrine of Reprobation, and therefore thought if you kept up their Dislike of that, you could overthrow the Doctrine of Election entirely. For, without Doubt, the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation must stand or fall together.

But passing by this, as also your equivocal Definition of the Word *Grace*, and your false Definition of the Word *Free*, and that I may be as short as possible, I frankly acknowledge, I believe the Doctrine of Reprobation, that God intends to give saving Grace, thro' Jesus Christ, only to a certain Number, and that the rest of Mankind, after the Fall of *Adam*, being justly left of God to continue in Sin, will at last suffer that eternal Death, which is its proper Wages.

This is the established Doctrine of Scripture, and acknowledged as such in the 17th Article of the Church of *England*, as Bishop *Burnet* himself confesses; yet dear Mr. *Wesley* absolutely denies it.

But the most important Objections, which you have urged against this Doctrine, as Reasons why you reject it, being seriously considered, and faithfully tried by the Word of God, will appear to be of no Force at all. Let the Matter be humbly and calmly reviewed, as to the following Heads.

“ First, you say, if this be so (*i. e.* if there be an Election) then is all preaching vain: It is needless to them that are elected; for they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be saved. There-“ fore

“ fore the end of preaching to save Souls is void, with  
 “ Regard to them. And it is uselesſ to them that are  
 “ not elec<sup>t</sup>ed; for they cannot possibly be ſaved;   
 “ they, whether with preaching or without, will in-  
 “ fallibly be damned. The End of preaching is there-  
 “ fore void, with Regard to them likewiſe. So that  
 “ in either Caſe our preaching is vain, and your hear-  
 “ ing also vain.” Page 10th Paragraph the 9th.

Oh, dear Sir, what kind of Reaſoning, or rather Sophiſtry is this! Hath not God, who hath appointed Salvation for a certain Number, appointed also the preaching of the Word, as a Means to bring them to it? Does any one hold Elec<sup>t</sup>ion in any other Sense? And if so, how is preaching needless to them that are elec<sup>t</sup>ed; when the Gofpel is deſigned by God himſelf to be the Power of God unto their eternal Salvation? And ſince we know not who are Elect and who Reprobate, we are to preach promiſcuouſly to all. For the Word may be uſeful, even to the Non-elec<sup>t</sup>, in reſtraining them from much Wickedneſſ and Sin. However it is enough to excite to the utmoſt Diligeſce in preaching and hearing, when we conſider that by these Means, ſome, even as many as the Lord hath ordain- ed to eternal Life, ſhall certainly be quickened and en- abled to believe. And who, that attends eſpecially with Reverence and Care, can tell but he may be found of that happy Number?

Secondly, you ſay, “ that it, *viz.* the Doctrine of  
 “ Elec<sup>t</sup>ion and Reprobation, directly tends to deſtroy  
 “ that Holineſſ, which is the End of all the Ordinances  
 “ of God.” For, ſays the dear miſtaken Mr. *Wesley*,  
 “ it wholly takes away those firſt Motives to follow  
 “ after it, ſo frequently propoſed in Scripture. The  
 “ Hope of future Reward, and Fear of Punishment,  
 “ the Hope of Heaven, and the Fear of Hell, &c.”  
 Page 11th.

I thought one, that carries Perfection to ſuch an ex- alted Pi<sup>t</sup>ch as dear Mr. *Wesley* does, would know that a true Lover of the Lord Jesus Christ would ſtrive to

be holy for the Sake of being holy, and work for Christ out of Love and Gratitude, without any Regard to the Rewards of Heaven, or Fear of Hell. You remember, dear Sir, what *Scougall* says "Love's a " more powerful Motive that does them move." But passing by this, and granting that Rewards and Punishments (as they certainly are) may be Motives from which a Christian may be honestly stirred up to act for God, how does the Doctrine of Election destroy these Motives? Do not the Elect know that the more good Works they do, the greater will be their Reward? And is not that Encouragement enough to set them upon, and cause them to persevere in working for Jesus Christ? And how does the Doctrine of Election destroy Holiness? Whoever preached any other Election than what the Apostle preached, when he said "Chosen thro' Sanctification of the Spirit?" Nay is not Holiness made a Mark of our Election by all that preach it? And how then can the Doctrine of Election destroy Holiness?

The Instance which you bring to illustrate your Assertion, indeed, dear Sir, is quite impertinent. For you say, "If a sick Man knows, that he must unavoidably die or unavoidably recover, tho' he knows not which, it is not reasonable to take any Physic at all," Page 11. Dear Sir, what absurd Reasoning is here? Was you ever sick in your Life? If so, did not the bare Probability or Possibility of your Recovering, tho' you knew it was unalterably fixed, that you must live or die, encourage you to take Physic? For how did you know but that very Physic might be the Means God intended to recover you by? Just thus it is as to the Doctrine of *Election*. I know that it is unalterably fixed, may one say, that I must be damned or saved. But since I know not which for a Certainty, why should I not strive, tho' at present in a State of Nature, since I know not but this Striving may be the Means God has intended to bless, in order to bring me into a State of Grace? Dear Sir, consider

sider these Things. Make an impartial Application, and then judge what little Reason you had to conclude the 10th Paragraph, Page 12, in these Words : " So directly does this Doctrine tend to shut the very Gate of Holiness in general, to hinder unholy Men from ever approaching thereto, or striving to enter in thereat."

" As directly, Paragraph 11. say you, does the Doctrine tend to destroy several particular Branches of Holiness, such as Meekness, Love, &c." I shall say little, dear Sir, in answer to this Paragraph. Dear Mr. *Wesley* perhaps has been disputing with some warm narrow spirited Men that held Election, and then infers, that their Warmth and Narrowness of Spirit was owing to their Principles? But does not dear Mr. *Wesley* know many dear Children of God, who are Predestinarians, and yet are meek, lowly, pitiful, courteous, tender-hearted, of a Catholic Spirit, and kind, and hope to see the most vile and profligate of Men converted? And why? Because they know God saved them by an Act of his electing Love, and they know not but he may have elected those who now seem to be the most abandoned. But, dear Sir, we must not judge of the Truth of Principles in general, nor of this of Election in particular, intirely from the Practice of some that profess to hold them. If so, I am sure much might be said against your own. For I appeal to your own Heart, whether or not you have not felt in yourself, or observed in others, a narrow spirit-edness, and some Disunion of Soul towards those that hold particular Redemption. If so, then according to your own Rule, *Universal Redemption* is wrong, because it destroys several Branches of Holiness, such as Meekness, Love, &c. But not to insist upon this, I beg you would observe, that your Inference is intirely set aside by the Force of the Apostle's Argument, and the Language which he expressly uses. For, Col. iii. 12, and 13. he says, *Put on therefore, (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humble-*

ness

ness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Here we see that the Apostle exhorts them to put on Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, &c. upon this Consideration, namely, because they were Elect of God. And all who have experimentally felt this Doctrine in their Hearts, feel that these Graces are the genuine Effects of their being elected of God.

But, perhaps, dear Mr. *Wesley* may be mistaken in this Point, and call that Passion, which is only Zeal for God's Truths. You know, dear Sir, the Apostle exhorts us to "contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints," and therefore you must not condemn all that appear zealous for the Doctrine of Election, as narrow-spirited or Persecutors, because they think it their Duty to oppose you. I am sure, I love you in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, and think I could lay down my Life for your Sake; but yet, dear Sir, I cannot help strenuously opposing your Errors upon this important Subject, because I think you warmly, tho' not designedly, oppose the Truth, as it is in Jesus. May the Lord remove the Scales of Prejudice from off the Eyes of your Mind, and give you a Zeal according to true Christian Knowledge!

Thirdly, says your Sermon, Page 13th, Paragraph 12. "This Doctrine tends to destroy the Comforts of Religion, the Happiness of Christianity, &c."

But how does Mr. *Wesley* know this, who never believed Election? I believe they who have experienced it, will agree with our 17th Article, "that the godly Consideration of Predestination, and Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, unspeakable Comfort to godly Persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the Works of the Flesh, and their earthly Members, and drawing their Minds to high and heavenly Things, as well because it does greatly establish and confirm their

“ their Faith of eternal Salvation, to be enjoyed thro’ Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their Love towards God, &c.” This plainly shews that our godly Reformers did not think Election destroyed Holiness, or the Comforts of Religion. As for my own Part, this Doctrine is my daily Support. I should utterly sink under a Dread of my impending Tryals, was I not firmly persuaded that God has chosen me in Christ from before the Foundation of the World, and that now being effectually called, he will suffer none to pluck me out of his Almighty Hand.

You proceed thus, “ this is evident as to all those who believe themselves to be reprobate, or only suspect or fear it; all the great and precious promises are lost to them; they afford them no Ray of Comfort.”

In Answer to this, let me observe that none living, especially none who are desirous of Salvation, can know that they are not of the Number of God’s Elect. None, but the Unconverted, can have any just Reason, so much as to fear it. And would dear Mr. *Wesley* give Comfort, or dare you apply the precious Promises of the Gospel, being Children’s Bread, to Men in a natural State while they continue so? God forbid! What if the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation does put some upon doubting? So does that of Regeneration. But is not this Doubting a good Means to put them upon searching and striving, and that striving a good Means to make their Calling and their Election sure? This is one Reason among many others why I admire the Doctrine of Election, and am convinced that it should have a Place in Gospel Ministry, and should be insisted on with Faithfulness and Care. It has a natural Tendency to rouze the Soul out of its carnal Security. And therefore many carnal Men cry out against it. Whereas *Universal Redemption* is a Notion sadly adapted to keep the Soul in its lethargic sleepy Condition, and therefore so many natural Men admire and applaud it.

Your 13th, 14th and 15th Paragraphs come next

to be considered. " The Witness of the Spirit, you say, Paragraph 14th, Page 14, Experience shews to be much obstructed by this Doctrine." But, dear Sir, whose Experience? Not your own; for in your Journal, from your embarking for *Georgia*, to your Return to *London*, Page the last, you seem to acknowledge that you have it not, and therefore you are no competent Judge in this Matter. You must mean then the Experience of others. For you say in the same Paragraph " Even in those, who have tasted of that good Gift, who yet have soon lost it again (I suppose you mean lost the *Sense* of it again) and fallen back into Doubts and Fears and Darkness, even horrible Darkness, that might be felt, &c." Now as to the Darkness of Desertion, was not this the Case of Jesus Christ himself, after he had received an unmeasurable Unction of the Holy Ghost? *Was not his Soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death* in the Garden? And was he not surrounded with an horrible Darkness, even " a Darkness that might be felt," when on the Cross he cryed out, *My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?* And that all his Followers are liable to the same, is it not evident from Scripture? For says the Apostle, " He was tempted in all Things like unto his Brethren, that he might be able to succour those that are tempted." And is not their Liableness thereunto well consistent with that Conformity to him in Suffering, which his Members are to bear? Why then should Persons falling into Darkness, after they have received the Witness of the Spirit, be any Argument against the Doctrine of Election? " Yes, you say, many, very many of those that hold it not in all Parts of the Earth, have enjoyed the uninterrupted Witness of the Spirit, the continual Light of God's Countenance, from the Moment wherein they first believed for many Months or Years to this very Day." But how does dear Mr. *Wesley* know this? Has he consulted the Experience of many, very many in all Parts of the Earth? Or could he be sure of what he

he hath advanced without sufficient Grounds, would it follow that their being kept in this Light, is owing to their not believing the Doctrine of Election? No, this, according to the Sentiments of our Church, "greatly confirms and establishes a true Christian's " Faith of eternal Salvation thro' Christ," and is an Anchor of Hope, both sure and stedfast, when he walks in Darkness and sees no Light, as certainly he may, even after he hath received the Witness of the Spirit, whatever you or others may unadvisedly assert to the contrary. Then to have Respect to God's everlasting Covenant, and to throw himself upon the free distinguishing Love of that God, who changeth not, will make him lift up the Hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble Knees. But without the Belief of the Doctrine of Election, and the Immutability of the free Love of God, I cannot see how 'tis possible that any should have a comfortable Assurance of eternal Salvation. What could it signify to a Man whose Conscience is thorowly awakened, and who is warned in good Earnest to seek Deliverance from the Wrath to come, tho' he should be assured that all his past Sins are forgiven, and that he is now a Child of God, if notwithstanding this, he may hereafter become a Child of the Devil, and be cast into Hell at last? Could such an Assurance yield any solid lasting Comfort to a Person convinced of the Corruption and Treachery of his own Heart, and of the Malice, Subtilty and Power of Satan? No! That which alone deserves the Name of a full Assurance of Faith, is such an Assurance as emboldens the Believer, under the Sense of his Interest in distinguishing Love, to give the Challenge to all his Adversaries, whether Men or Devils, and that with Regard to all their future as well as present Attempts to destroy, saying with the Apostle, "Who shall " lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is " God that justifies me: Who is he that condemns " me? It is Christ that died: Yea rather that is risen " again, who is even at the Right Hand of God, who

" also maketh Intercession for me. Who shall separate me from the Love of Christ? shall Tribulation or Distress, or Persecution or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril or Sword? Nay, in all these Things I am more than Conqueror, through him that loved me. For I am persuaded, that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate me from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."

This, dear Sir, is the triumphant Language of every Soul that has attained a full Assurance of Faith. And this Assurance can only arise from a Belief of God's electing everlasting Love. That many have an Assurance that they are in Christ To-day, but take no Thought for, or are not assured they shall be in him To-morrow, nay to all Eternity, is rather their Imperfection and Unhappiness than their Privilege. I pray God bring all such to a Sense of his eternal Love, that they may no longer build upon their own Faithfulness, but on the Unchangeableness of that God, whose Gifts and Callings are without Repentance. For those whom God has once justified, he also will glorify. I observed before, dear Sir, it is not always a safe Rule to judge of the Truth of Principles from Peoples Practice. And therefore, supposing all that held *universal Redemption* in your Way of explaining it, after they received Faith, *enjoyed the continual uninterrupted Sight of God's Countenance*, it does not follow, that this is a Fruit of their Principle: For that I am sure has a natural Tendency to keep the Soul in Darkness for ever; because the Creature thereby is taught, that his being kept in a State of Salvation is owing to his own Free-will. And what a fAndy Foundation is that for a poor Creature to build his Hopes of Perseverance upon? Every Relapse into Sin, every Surprize by Temptation, must throw him "into Doubts and Fears, " into horrible Darkness, even Darkness that may be " felt."

“ felt.” Hence it is, that the Letters which have been lately sent me by those who hold *Universal Redemption* are dead and lifeless, dry and inconsistent, in Comparison of those I receive from Persons on the contrary Side. Those who settle in the universal Scheme, tho’ they might begin in the Spirit (whatever they may say to the contrary) are ending in the Flesh, and building up a Righteousness founded on their own free Will. Whilst the others triumph in Hopes of the Glory of God, and build upon God’s never-failing Promise, and unchangeable Love, even when his sensible Presence is withdrawn from them. But I would not judge of the Truth of Election by the Experience of any particular Persons: If I did (O bear with me in this Foolishness of boasting) I think I myself might glory in Election. For these five or six Years I have received the Witness of God’s Spirit. Since that, blessed be God, I have not doubted a Quarter of an Hour of having a saving Interest in Jesus Christ. But with Grief and humble Shame I do acknowledge I have fallen into Sin often since that. Tho’ I do not, dare not allow of any one Transgression, yet hitherto I have not been (nor do I expect that while I am in this present World I ever shall be) able to live one Day perfectly free from all Defects and Sin. And since the Scriptures declare that *there is not a just Man upon Earth, no not among those of the highest Attainments in Grace, that doeth Good and sinneth not*; we are sure that this will be the Case of all the Children of God. The universal Experience and Acknowledgment of this, among the godly in every Age, is abundantly sufficient to confute the Error of those who hold it in an absolute Sense, that *after a Man is born again he cannot commit Sin, especially since the Holy Ghost condemns the Persons who say they have no Sin, as deceiving themselves, as being destitute of the Truth, and making God a Liar.* 1 Epist. John i. 8, 10. I have been also in Heaviness thro’ manifold Temptations, and expect to be often so before I die. Thus

were the Apostles and primitive Christians themselves. Thus was *Luther* that Man of God, who, as far as I can find, did not peremptorily, at least, hold Election; and the great *John Arndt* was in the utmost Perplexity a Quarter of an Hour before he died; and yet he was no *Predestinarian*. And if I must speak freely, I believe your fighting so strenuously against the Doctrine of Election, and pleading so vehemently for a sinless Perfection, are among the Reasons or culpable Causes, why you are kept out of the Liberties of the Gospel, and that full Assurance of Faith, which they enjoy, who have experimentally tasted, and daily feed upon God's electing, everlasting Love.

But perhaps you may say, that *Luther* and *Arndt* were no Christians, at least very weak ones. I know you think meanly of *Abraham*, tho' he was eminently called the Friend of God; and I believe also of *David*, the Man after God's own Heart. No Wonder therefore, that in a Letter you sent me not long since, you should tell me, "That no Baptist or Presbyterian Writer whom you have read, knew any thing of the Liberties of Christ." What! Neither *Bunyan*, *Henry*, *Flavel*, *Halyburton*, or none of the *New-England* and *Scots* Divines. See, dear Sir, what narrow Spiritedness and Want of Charity arise from your Principles, and then do not cry out against Election any more on Account of its being "destructive of Meekness and Love."

Fourthly, I shall now proceed to another Head.— Again, says the dear Mr. *Wesley*, Pag. 15. Par. 16. "How uncomfortable a Thought is this, that Thousands and Millions of Men, without any preceding Offence or Fault of theirs, were unchangeably doomed to everlasting Burnings?"

But who ever asserted, that Thousands and Millions of Men, without any preceding Offence or Fault of theirs, were unchangeably doomed to everlasting Burnings? Do not they who believe God's dooming Men to everlasting Burnings, also believe that God look'd upon

upon them as Men fallen in *Adam*? And that that Decree which ordained the Punishment, first regarded the Crime by which it was deserved? How then are they doomed without any preceding Fault? Surely Mr. *Wesley* will own God's Justice in imputing *Adam's* Sin to his Posterity, and also, that after *Adam* fell, and his Posterity in him, God might justly have passed them *ALL* by, without sending his own Son to be a Saviour for *any one*. Unless you heartily agree to both these Points, you do not believe Original Sin aright. If you do own them, then you must acknowledge the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation to be highly just and reasonable. For if God might justly impute *Adam's* Sin to *ALL*, and afterwards have passed by *ALL*, then he might justly pass by *some*. Turn on the Right Hand, or on the Left; you are reduced to an inextricable Dilemma. And if you would be consistent, you must either give up the Doctrine of the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin, or receive the amiable Doctrine of Election, with a Holy and righteous Reprobation as its Consequent. For whether you can believe it or no, the Word of God abides faithful. *The Election has obtained it, and the rest weere blinded.*

Your 17th Parag. Page 16, I pass over. What has been said on Parag. the 9th and 10th, with little Alteration will answer it. I shall only say 'tis the Doctrine of Election that mostly presses me to abound in good Works. I am made willing to suffer all things for the Elect's Sake. This makes me preach with Comfort, because I know Salvation does not depend on Man's Free-will, but the Lord makes them willing in the Day of his Power, and can make Use of me to bring some of his Elect home, when and where he pleases. But,

*Fifthly*, You say, Par. 18. Page 17. " This Doctrine has a direct manifest Tendency to overthrow the whole Christian Religion. For, say you, supposing that eternal unchangeable Decree, one Part

of Mankind must be saved, tho' the Christian Revelation were not in being."

But, dear Sir, how does that follow? Since it is only by the Christian Revelation that we are acquainted with God's Design of saving his Church by the Death of his Son. Yea, 'tis settled in the everlasting Covenant, that this Salvation shall be applied to the Elect through the Knowledge and Faith of him. As the Prophet says, *Isaiah* liii. 11. *By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.* How then has the Doctrine of Election a direct Tendency to overthrow the whole Christian Revelation? Whoever thought that God's Declaration to *Noah*, that Seed-time and Harvest should never cease, could afford an Argument for the Neglect of Plowing or Sowing? Or that the unchangeable Purpose of God, that Harvest should not fail, rendered the Heat of the Sun, or the Influence of the heavenly Bodies unnecessary to produce it? No more does God's absolute Purpose of saving his Chosen, preclude the Necessity of the Gospel Revelation, or the Use of any of the Means through which he has determined the Decree shall take Effect. Nor will the right understanding, or the reverent Belief of God's Decree, ever allow or suffer a Christian in any Case to separate the Means from the End, or the End from the Means. And since we are taught by the Revelation itself, that this was intended and given by God as a Means of bringing home his Elect, we therefore receive it with Joy, prize it highly, using it in Faith, and endeavour to spread it through all the World, in the full Assurance, that wherever God sends it, sooner or later, it shall be savingly useful to all the Elect within its Call. How then, in holding this Doctrine, do we join with modern Unbelievers in making the Christian Revelation unnecessary? No, dear Sir, you mistake: Infidels of all Kinds are on your Side of the Question. Deists, *Arians*, *Socinians*, arraign God's Sovereignty, and stand up for *Universal Redemption*. I pray God, dear Mr. *Wesley*'s Sermon, as it has grieved the

the Hearts of many of God's Children, may not also strengthen the Hands of many of his most avowed Enemies ! Here I could almost lie down and weep. *O tell it not in Gath ! Publish it not in the Streets of Askelon, lest the Daughters of the Uncircumcised rejoice, lest the Sons of Unbelief should triumph !*

Further, you say, Page 18th, Par. 19th, " This Doctrine makes Revelation contradict itself." For Instance, say you, " The Asserters of this Doctrine interpret that Text of Scripture, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*, as implying that God, in a literal Sense, hated *Esau* and all the Reprobates from Eternity ! " And when considered as *fallen in Adam*, were they not Objects of his Hatred ? And might not God of his own good Pleasure, love or shew Mercy to *Jacob* and the Elect, and yet at the same Time do the Reprobate no Wrong ? But you say, " God is Love." And cannot God be Love, unless he shews the same Mercy to all ?

Again, says dear Mr. *Wesley*, " They infer from that Text, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy*, that God is Mercy only to some Men, viz. the Elect ; and that he has Mercy for those only, flatly contrary to which is the whole Tenor of the Scripture, as is that express Declaration in particular, *The Lord is loving to every Man, and his Mercy is over all his Works.*" And so it is, but not his saving Mercy. God is loving to every Man, he sends his Rain upon the Evil and upon the Good. But you say, " God is no Respecter of Persons." No ! For every one, whether Jew or Gentile, that believeth on *Jesus*, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him. *But he that believeth not shall be damned.* For God is no Respecter of Persons, i. e. upon the Account of any outward Condition or Circumstance in Life whatever. Nor does the Doctrine of Election in the least suppose him to be so. But as the Sovereign Lord of all, who is Debtor to none, he has a Right to do what he will with his own, and dispense his Favours to what Objects

jects he sees fit, merely at his Pleasure. And his supreme Right herein, is clearly and strongly asserted in those Passages of Scripture, where he says, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion*, Rom. ix. 15. Exod. xxxiii. 19.

Further in Page 19th you represent us as inferring from the Text, “*The Children not being yet born, neither having done Good or Evil*, that the Purpose of “God, according to Election, might stand, not of “Works, but of him that calleth, it was said “unto her (unto *Rebecca*) *The elder shall serve the younger.*” That our Predestination to Life no ways depends on the Fore-knowledge of God. But who infers this, dear Sir? For if Fore-knowledge signifies Approbation, as it does in several Parts of Scripture, then we confess that Predestination and Election do depend on God’s Fore-knowledge. But if by God’s Fore-knowledge you understand God’s foreseeing some good Works done by his Creatures as the Foundation or Reason of chusing them, and therefore electing them, then we say, that in this Sense, Predestination does not any Way depend on God’s Fore-knowledge. But I refer’d you, at the Beginning of this Letter, to Dr. *Edwards* his *Veritas Redux*, which I recommended to you in a late Letter, with *Eliese Cole* on God’s Sovereignty. Be pleased to read those, and also the excellent Sermons of Mr. *Cooper* of *Boston* in *New-England*, which I also sent you, and I doubt not but you will see all your Objections answered. Tho’ I would observe, that after all our reading on both Sides the Question, we shall never in this Life be able to search out God’s Decrees to Perfection. No, we must humbly adore what we cannot comprehend, and with the great Apostle at the End of our Enquiries cry out *Oh the Depth, &c.* or with our Lord, when he was admiring God’s Sovereignty, *Even so Father, for so it seemeth Good in thy Sight.*

However

However, it may not be amiss to take Notice, that if those Texts, “*God willeth that none should perish,*” I “ have no Pleasure in him that dieth,” and such like, be taken in their strictest Sense, then no one will be damned.

But here’s the Distinction. God taketh no Pleasure in the Death of Sinners, so as to delight simply in their Death; but he delights to magnify his Justice, by inflicting the Punishment which their Iniquities have deserved. As a righteous Judge, who takes no Pleasure in condemning a Criminal, may yet justly command him to be executed, that Law and Justice may be satisfied, even tho’ it be in his Power to procure him a Reprieve.

I would hint farther, that you unjustly charge the Doctrine of *Reprobation* with Blasphemy, whereas the Doctrine of *Universal Redemption*, as you set it forth, is really the highest Reproach upon the Dignity of the Son of God, and the Merit of his Blood. Consider therefore, whether it be not Blasphemy rather to say as you do, Page 20. “ Christ not only died for those “ that are saved, but also for those that perish.” The Text you have misapplied to gloss over this, see explained by *Ridgely, Edwards, Henry*; and I purposely omit answering your Texts myself, that you may be brought to read such Treatises, which, under God, would shew you your Error. You cannot make good this Assertion, “ That Christ died for “ them that perish,” without holding (as *Peter Boehler*, one of the *Moravian Brethren*, in order to make out *Universal Redemption*, lately frankly confessed in a Letter) “ That all the damned Souls would hereafter be “ brought out of Hell.” I cannot think Mr. *Wesley* is thus minded. And yet without this can be proved, *Universal Redemption*, taken in a literal Sense, falls entirely to the Ground. For how can *all* be universally redeemed, if *all* are not finally saved?

Dear Sir, For Jesus Christ’s Sake, consider how you dishonour God by denying Election. You plainly make Salvation depend not on God’s *Free Grace*, but

on Man's *Free-will*. And 'tis more than probable, Jesus Christ would not have had the Satisfaction of seeing the Fruit of his Death in the eternal Salvation of one Soul. Our Preaching would then be vain, and all Invitations for People to believe in him, would also be in vain.

But blessed be God, our Lord knew for whom he died. There was an eternal Compact between the Father and the Son. A certain Number was then given him, as the Purchase and Reward of his Obedience and Death. For these he prayed, *John xvii.* and not for the World. For these, and these only, he is now interceding, and with their Salvation he will be fully satisfied.

I purposely omit making any further particular Remarks on the several last Pages of your Sermon. Indeed had not your Name, dear Sir, been prefixed to the Sermon, I could not have been so uncharitable as to think you were the Author of such Sophistry. You beg the Question in saying, that God has declared, (notwithstanding you own, I suppose, some will be damned) that he would save all, *i. e.* every *individual* Person. You take it for granted (for solid Proof you have none) that God is unjust, if he passes by any, and then you exclaim against the *Horrible Decree*. And yet, as I before hinted, in holding the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, you profess to believe that he might justly have passed by all.

Dear dear Sir, O be not offended! For Christ's Sake be not rash! Give yourself to Reading. Study the Covenant of Grace. Down with your carnal Reasoning. Be a little Child. And then, instead of pawning your Salvation, as you have done in a late Hymn Book, if the Doctrine of *Universal Redemption* be not true. Instead of talking of sinless Perfection, as you have done in the Preface to that Hymn-Book, and making Man's Salvation depend on his own Free-will, as you have in this Sermon, you will compose a Hymn in Praise of sovereign distinguishing Love.

You

You will caution Believers against striving to work a Perfection out of their own Hearts, and print another Sermon the Reverse of this, and entitle it *Free-Grace* indeed. *Free*, because not *free to all*; but *free*, because God may withhold or give it to whom and when he pleases.

Till you do this, I must doubt whether or not you know yourself. In the mean while, I cannot but blame you for censuring the Clergy of our Church for not keeping to their Articles, when you yourself by your Principles positively deny the 9th, 10th and 17th. Dear Sir, these Things ought not so to be. God knows my Heart, as I told you before, so I declare again, nothing but a single Regard to the Honour of Christ has forced this Letter from me. I love and honour you for his Sake; and when I come to Judgment, will thank you before Men and Angels, for what you have under God done for my Soul.

There, I am persuaded, I shall see dear Mr. *Wesley* convinced of *Election* and everlasting Love. And it often fills me with Pleasure, to think how I shall behold you casting your Crown down at the Feet of the Lamb, and as it were, filled with a holy Blushing for opposing the Divine Sovereignty in the Manner you have done.

But I hope the Lord will shew you this before you go hence. O how do I long for that Day! If the Lord should be pleased to make Use of this Letter for that Purpose, it would abundantly rejoice the Heart of, Dear and Honour'd Sir,

*Your affectionate, tho' unworthy*

*Brother and Servant in Christ,*

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

*A HYMN by the Reverend Dr. WATTS,**on Rom. ix. 21, 22, 23, 24.*

**B**EHOLD the Potter and the Clay;  
 He forms his Vessels as he please:  
 Such is our God, and such are we,  
 The Subjects of his high Decrees.

- 2 Doth not the Workman's Power extend  
 O'er all the Mass—which Part to chuse,  
 And mould it for a nobler End,  
 And which to leave for viler Use?
- 3 May not the sovereign Lord on high  
 Dispense his Favours as he will?  
 Chuse some to Life while others die,  
 And yet be just and gracious still?
- 4 What if to make his Terror known,  
 He lets his Patience long endure,  
 Suffering vile Rebels to go on,  
 And seal their own Destruction sure!
- 5 What if he means to shew his Grace,  
 And his electing Love employs,  
 To mark out some of mortal Race,  
 And form them fit for heavenly Joys?
- 6 Shall Man reply against the Lord?  
 And call his Maker's Ways unjust,  
 The Thunder of whose dreadful Word,  
 Can crush a thousand Worlds to Dust?

7 But

7 *But O my Soul if Truth so bright,  
Should dazzle and confound thy Sight,  
Yet still his written Will obey,  
And wait the great decisive Day.*

8 *Then shall he make his Justice known,  
And the whole World before his Throne,  
With Joy or Terror, shall confess  
The Glory of his Righteousness.*

F I N I S.

## Of Original or Birth Sin.

**O**riginal Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk) but it is the Fault and Corruption of the Nature of every Man, that naturally is engendered of the Offspring of *Adam*, whereby Man is very far gone from Original Righteousness, and is of his own Nature inclined to Evil, so that the Flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit; and therefore, in every Person born in this World, it deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation. And this Infection of Nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerate, whereby the Lust of the Flesh, called in Greek φρονμα σαρκος, which some do expound the Wisdom, some Sensuality, some the Affection, some the Desire of the Flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And altho' there is no Condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that Concupiscence and Lust hath of itself the Nature of Sin.

## Of Free-will.

**T**HE Condition of Man, after the Fall of *Adam*, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural Strength and good Works, to Faith and calling upon God: Wherefore, we have no Power to do good Works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good Will, and working with us when we have that good Will.

## Of Predestination and Election.

**P**Redestination to Life, is the everlasting Purpose of God, whereby (before the Foundations of the World were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his Counsel, secret to us, to deliver from Curse and Damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of Mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made

*made to Honour.* Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a Benefit of God, be called according to God's Purpose, by his Spirit working in due Season: They through Grace obey the Calling: They be justified freely: They be made Sons of God by Adoption: They be made like the Image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: They walk religiously in good Works, and at length, by God's Mercy, they attain to everlasting Felicity.

As the godly Consideration of *Predestination* and our Election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable Comfort to godly Persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the Works of the *Flesh*, and their earthly Members, and drawing up their Minds to high and heavenly Things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their Faith of eternal Salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their Love towards God: So, for curious and carnal Persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their Eyes the Sentence of God's *Predestination* is a most dangerous Downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into Desperation, or into Wretchedness of most unclean Living, no less perilous than Desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's Promises in such-wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: And in our Doings that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the Word of God.

1501

l'altre ed il libro di soli 177 versi. Il quale  
verso è questo: *Ho lo zerbino in mano, al quale  
non intendo niente, e non lo posso  
nominare, e non so di cosa  
sia questo zerbino, chiamato vento: 1501.*

Il quale verso è questo: *Ho lo zerbino in mano, al quale*

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7 AP 56

